

***Oenothera flava* (A. Nels.) Garrett**

long-tubed evening primrose
Onagraceae (Evening Primrose Family)

Status: State Possibly Extirpated

Rank: G5SH

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1961):

Oenothera flava is a perennial that grows in dense tufts and is sparsely covered with minute, straight, stiff hairs, or nearly glabrous. The oblanceolate leaves are in tufts or rosettes, 2 to 8 in. (5-20 cm) long, up to ½ in. (1.5cm) broad, with the lower portion 1/3 deeply cleft or lobed half the distance or more to the middle, and the uppermost part entire to somewhat wavy and toothed. The flowers open in the evening and are solitary at the tips of flower stalks; the flower stalks do not exceed the length of the leaves. The calyx is usually purplish, ¾ to 4¾ in. (2-12 cm) long, with free or slightly fused lobes, and usually turned to one side. The petals are yellow, aging to purplish, and are ½ to ¾ in. (10-20 mm) long. The anthers are linear and ¼ in. (4-8 mm) long. The stigma lobes are linear and about 1/8 in. (3 mm) long. The capsules are woody, ovoid, ½ to ¾ in. (10-20 mm) long, and conspicuously 4-winged.

Identification Tips: Within its range in Washington *Oenothera flava* may be confused with *O. caespitosa* ssp. *caespitosa*. However, *O. flava* has yellow petals that age to purple and reach up to ¾ in. (2 cm) long, and capsules that are conspicuously winged, while *O. caespitosa* ssp. *caespitosa* has white petals that age to purple and are well over ¾ in. (2 cm) long, and capsules that lack wings. *O. caespitosa* ssp. *caespitosa* is not found in the wetland habitats of *O. flava*.

Phenology: The Washington collection was found in early June, although it blooms later in most of its range.

Range: This species is distributed in Saskatchewan to Mexico in the Rocky Mountain states, and west to Oregon and California. In Washington it was historically known from Yakima County.

Habitat: In Washington *Oenothera flava* was found growing along the Yakima River. There is no elevation or associated species information available.

Oenothera flava

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Known distribution
of *Oenothera flava*
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Ecology: This species is usually found in the plains and lower foothills in hard packed soil, in swales, or around vernal pools, in the plains and lower foothills. Throughout its range it is likely to occur in both wetlands and non-wetlands, but in our region it tends to occur in wetlands (USDA 2002).

State Status Comments: In Washington this species is known from only one historical site in Yakima County from 1884. Since then there have been no sightings of *Oenothera flava* in Washington.

Inventory Needs: Surveys in 1981 in Yakima County found no populations. Appropriate habitat in Yakima County and elsewhere in the Columbia Basin should be surveyed for possible populations.

Threats and Management Concerns: The historical occurrence site may not longer support native vegetation.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1961. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 3: Saxifragaceae to Ericaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 614 pp.

Kartesz, J.T. & C.A. Meacham. 2003. *Synthesis of the North American Flora, Version 2.0*.

USDA, NRCS. 2002. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA. Website accessed 25 October, 2004.